



Minimalism is hot: the sun-filled, modern kitchen, left, designed in wood and black granite, looks on to the yard and incorporates a large sliding glass panel

Photographs:
NICK KANE

Right: lovely Regency fireplaces were reopened and repaired – this one making a perfect anchor for the modern artwork above it



How to solve a tricky problem

An ultra-modern glass extension breathed new life into a Grade II* listed Regency house that's now a stunning space for the owner's contemporary art collection, says **Philippa Stockley**

PEOPLE love telling you that you'll need planning permission even to change a door-knob in a listed property. But as long as you work closely with the planners you can often make dramatic changes, including major additions, to listed homes. Even, it turns out, to a rare Grade II* home – the star makes it very special.

That's what happened with an 1830 Regency terrace house in Marylebone, part of the Crown Estate, which is an exacting freeholder. The old house has not only been opened up to its original gracious room sizes and renovated top to toe, but gained a modern two-storey extension right across the back, linked to the house with a bridge set between two double-height glass atria.

The generous 550sqft extension holds a modern kitchen above and a wonderfully light family room below. To complete the transformation, at the top of the house a stylish perforated steel stair now leads to the roof instead of a wooden ladder.

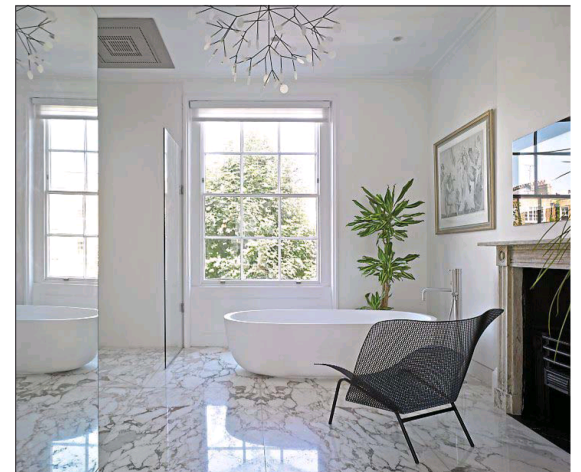
This home was shortlisted for two awards by the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors. In 2012, however, when its new owner called in an architect, it was in a bad way. Back in the Seventies, the 3,300sqft house had been carved up into multiple bedsits, with a dilapidated two-storey dog leg extension whacked on the back, creating a dank side return in the garden. The attic ceilings were low and the basement was a cave. Period detail

such as original plaster corning had been hacked through to divide rooms, while doors and original fireplaces were covered with plasterboard, and the maze of old wiring and plumbing needed ripping out. Some original shutters had been painted or screwed in. Yet beneath all these indignities was a fine old house with beautiful proportions, a curving stone staircase and lovely timber windows.

The owner, a modern art-loving former lawyer in his late thirties, was keen to work with the architect. He wanted a high-spec and sensitive renovation of the beautiful entertaining spaces, and a clever solution to the bad extension. Architect Shahriar Nasser came up with the inspired idea of separating a full-width new extension from the house by means of a pair of two-storey glass boxes either side of a little bridge joining the old house to the new extension.

These atria, with huge panes of glass, would be big enough for a small tree, and create lovely internal courtyards. Closed at the top, they would also be secure. It also meant that the back of the listed house was hardly touched – which was important.

The new extension would go down just a bit lower than the old one, creating better head-height in the lower family room. Above, in a room full of sun, Nasser designed a modern kitchen in wood and black granite. Looking on to the yard, as much glass was used as possible – the kitchen has a vast sliding panel that slips behind a window that

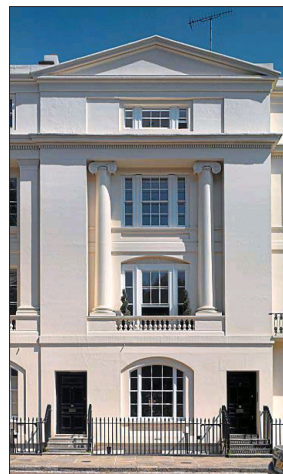
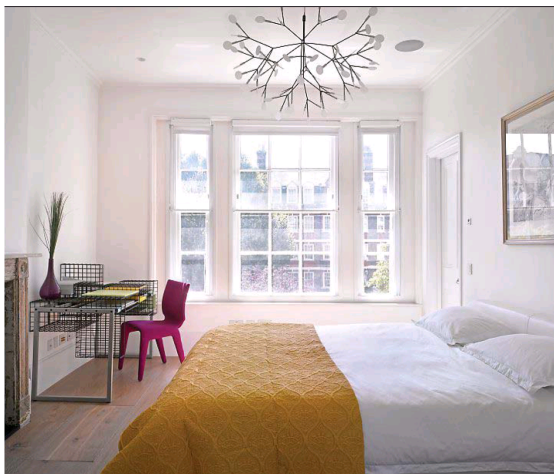
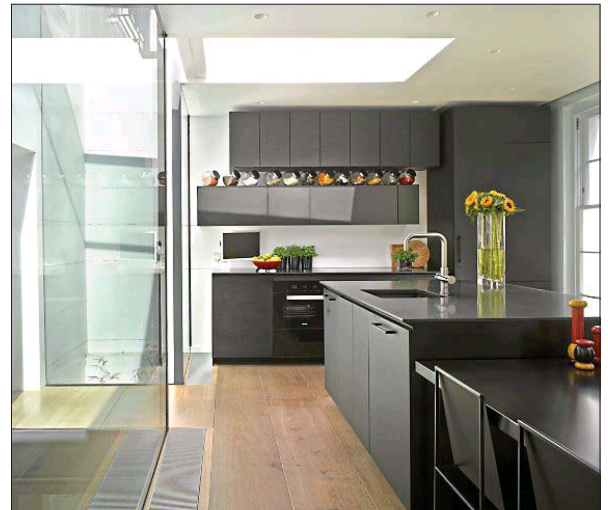


has an 18th-century appearance. While this extension adds huge wow factor, entertaining space and tremendous light, it is beautifully integrated with the rest of the renovation.

The house was slowly brought back to elegant life with solid wood floors throughout; the replacement of cornices by specialists; the reopening of rooms, and repair of windows, shutters, balconies, and of the lovely Regency fireplaces. But neither architect nor client wanted a museum, so the house, white-painted, underfloor-heated, lit by really modern chandeliers, is a sexy foil to

modern art and modern furniture the second floor, a master bedroom spacious master bathroom are very and airy. Floored entirely in grey-ve white marble, the bathroom has a sl freestanding Corian bath while the inhabits a mirrored pod, which is and fun. This floor has a dressing r to the side.

All this took three months to de and more than six months to go thr planning, for on a house of this im tance the planners consulted His England, whose only slight interver concerned the back of the exten: resulting in its charming half-moc



Top: the twin glass atria that link the 550sq ft extension to the house are big enough to hold trees and create lovely internal courtyards

Above: the new kitchen sits on top of a family room which has been given extra headroom

Right: new wood floors and cornicing retain the 18th-century feel, balanced with a modern take on droplet chandeliers



18th century appearance. Once the owners were happy, works took just a year.

You'd never guess: above left, the ultra-modern master bathroom with handsome grey-veined marble floor, and above, a bedroom that blends old and new so charmingly, sit behind the classical Regency terrace façade in Marylebone, above right

THE knack with this sort of project is to respect the original house, and use the best materials and craft. Such houses originally had astonishing proportions and light, and need little except immaculate restoration to make them sparkle afresh. And as this project proves, you can do something old and ultra-modern, too. It's the combination of old and new that is so exciting.

EXPERT TIPS TO RESTORING A LISTED PROPERTY

ARCHITECT Shahriar Nasser says it is vital to remember that with a listed home, the whole property is listed, not just the façade. Nevertheless, planners may be more open to changes in parts that have already been altered, or are less important, such as the basement. Each case is unique. Do your homework and consult with the planners from the word go. Crown Estate rules for basements are strict. A basement cannot go under existing houses but may be allowed under a section of the garden, for example. However, there are strict

perimeter rules, so as before, the golden rule is: Do your homework before any spadework. Here is Shahriar Nasser's guide to the cost of restoring a listed property: **■ To refurbish**, expect to pay between £2,500 and £3,500 per square metre. **■ For additions** to the property, expect to pay £3,500 to £4,500 per square metre. **■ For basements** expect to pay £5,000 to £6,000 per square metre. **■ These costs** do not include architect's fees or VAT.

- Get the look**
Architect: Shahriar Nasser at Belsize Architects (belsizearchitects.com)
Bespoke glazing: culmax.co.uk
Sliding glazed box to roof: glazingvision.co.uk
Polished concrete: lazenby.co.uk
Flooring: solidfloor.co.uk
Egg-shaped bath and other sanitary ware: boffiuk.com
Marble bathroom floor made of Calacatta Oro. Try calacattamarble.co.uk
White paint throughout: dulux.co.uk